

# FACT SHEET



## MARCO Superfund Site Chanute, Kansas

April 1998

### SITE UPDATE

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 is currently addressing contamination at the Mid-America Refinery Company (MARCO) Superfund Site in Chanute, Kansas. The agency is removing petroleum tanks and their contents, in addition to above and below-ground piping from the site. Contaminated soil is also being excavated, due to petroleum materials that have leaked from the tanks over time.

### BACKGROUND

The Mid-America Refinery Company in Chanute, Kansas, is a 25-acre abandoned oil refinery. The facility operated from 1934 to 1981, when it was shut down due to bankruptcy. During that time, MARCO processed about 2,800 barrels per day of crude stock that was turned into diesel fuel, jet fuel, gas, oil and kerosene. The remaining products were used to make asphalt.

In 1986, the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) performed a preliminary assessment to survey the condition of the abandoned refinery. KDHE referred the site to EPA in 1992. In November 1992, EPA conducted an initial site investigation, which indicated that at least 40% of the 138 tanks that were on-site had inadequate diking. Excessive runoff and pools of oily water were noted throughout the site during heavy precipitation.

The property was purchased by a trustee of the Robert Cooley Trust Fund in January 1994. Numerous Unilateral Administrative Orders (UAOs) have been issued to the trustee to clean up the site. However, these UAOs have been unsuccessful in motivating the trust to take any cleanup action.

In 1994, a cleanup, under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), addressed the hazardous waste and asbestos that was located on-site. Fifty-nine tanks containing petroleum related waste remained on-site after this cleanup action due to the CERCLA petroleum exclusion provision. The petroleum exclusion provision states that Superfund resources cannot be used for the cleanup of petroleum materials.

After the CERCLA cleanup was completed, the trustee of the site obtained the services of scrap metal salvagers. During these "scrapping" efforts, tops and sides of tanks were cut off, which has allowed rainwater to collect in the tanks and the petroleum materials to leak directly onto the ground. Because the site sits on a steep hill, run-off from rain allows these petroleum

materials to discharge into a drainage ditch. The drainage ditch runs through a wetlands and discharges into Village Creek, which then flows into the Neosho River, the source for drinking water for the city of Chanute.

## **SITE ACTIVITIES**

The EPA is currently removing petroleum tanks and piping from the refinery site. The majority of the tanks are in poor condition and are leaking petroleum materials. The soil surrounding these tanks has also been contaminated from the petroleum discharge. The agency is excavating the contaminated soil at this time.

This action is authorized by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (“Clean Water Act”) as amended by the Oil Pollution Act of 1990 (OPA). OPA allows for the removal or arrangements for the removal of oil-contaminated materials and debris to prevent the threat of a substantial discharge of oil into a waterway.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

If you have questions about this fact sheet, or need additional information regarding this site, please contact:

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